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"TO CARE FOR HIM WHO HAS BORNE THE BATTLE, AND FOR HIS WIDOW AND ORPHANS."

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ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND

AND THE BATTLE OF STONE RIVER.

Gen. Buell Relieved by Gen. Rosecrans, who Carries Out Buell's Plan of Campaign—Personnel of the Army and Corps Commanders—Preliminary Operations—Concentration of the Union Army at Nashville and the Confederate Army in Front of Murfreesboro.

From a forth-coming history of "Kentucky in the War," by G. C. Kniffin, late lieutenant-colonel on the staff of Major-General Thomas L. Crittenden.

The Army of the Ohio, after crowding into the space of six weeks more hard marching and fighting than fell to the lot of any other army in the United States during the summer of 1862, was on the last of October encamped in the vicinity of Bowling Green, Ky. General Bragg and Kirby Smith turning Buell's left flank had invaded Kentucky, gained the rear of Buell, threatened his base at Louisville, and but for the *vis inertia* which always seemed ready to seize upon the confederates when in sight of complete victory would have captured Louisville. The battle of Perryville resulting in the hasty exit of the combined armies of Bragg and Smith through Cumberland Gap into East Tennessse, the deliberate sweep of Buell's columns in their rear, the halt at Crab Orchard, and the return march towards Nashville are part of the events of an earlier chapter in the history of the rebellion. The occupation of East Tennessee by the Union Army had from the commencement of hostilities been an object dear to the great heart of President Lincoln. He had hoped for its accomplishment under General Sherman. It had been included in the instructions to General Buell, but eighteen months had passed and the confederate flag still waved in triumph from the spire of the court-house at Knoxville. The retreat of the confederate army into East Tennessee in what was reported as a routed and disorganized condition had seemed like a favorable opportunity to carry out the long-cherished design of the Government. The movement of large armies across the country upon a map in the War Office, although apparently practicable, bore so little relation to actual campaigning as to have already caused the decapitation of more than one general.

The positive refusal of General Buell to march 60,000 men into a sterile and hostile country across a range of mountains in pursuit of an army of equal strength with his own, when by simply turning southward he could meet it around the western spur of the same range, although it has since been upheld by every military authority, caused his prompt removal from command of the army he had

ORGANIZED AND LED TO VICTORY.

The army had been slow to believe in the incapacity of General Buell, and had recognized the wisdom of his change of front from Cumberland Gap towards Nashville, but there were causes for dissatisfaction, which, in the absence of knowledge as to the difficulties under which he labored, were attributed to him. A full knowledge of all the circumstances would have transferred them to the War Department. Chief among these was the irregular system in the Paymaster's Department. General Rosecrans found, on assuming command, that over one million dollars was required to liquidate the arrearages of pay due the soldiers of his army. He attributed the temporary desertion of a large proportion of the absentees to the fact that they had not been paid for six months, and, being poor men, they had gone home to look after the welfare of their families. It has been the custom of historians of the Army of the Cumberland, at this period, to refer to the demoralized condition in which General Buell left it. The returns show nearly as large a proportion of its aggregate present for duty on the 10th of November, as were found in either the Army of the Tennessee or the Army of the Potomac.

The following tabular statement will show the condition of the armies of the Cumberland, the Tennessee, and the Potomac on November 10, 1862.

ARMY.	Present for Duty.	Sick present.	In arrest.	Detached service.	Absent with leave.	Absent without leave.	Present and absent aggregate.
Cum'd....	93,759	7,740	326	50	26,432	6,484	134,791
Tenn	61,558	5,609	275	3,220	10,343	7,545	88,550
Potomac	229,144	19,846	1,199	117,482	65,552	5,938	338,141
Total...	383,451	33,195	1,800	120,756	102,327	19,967	561,482

Buell's proportion of absentees to aggregate was 24½ per cent., Grant's 20 per cent., and Burnside's 21½ per cent. Besides the causes above given there was another and more potent reason for the temporary absence of both officers and men on leave. Buell's army had returned after a years' absence to a point within a few hours' ride of the homes of the soldiers. From Louisville railroads radiate towards all points in the northwestern States, and the soldiers no sooner found their line of march tending southward than they were seized with an inexpressible longing to visit their families. Regimental commanders were besieged for furloughs, if only for a few days, that the poor fellows might once more see the faces of their loved ones before marching away to

TO BATTLE AND PERHAPS TO DEATH.

It was impossible to resist these appeals from men who had exhibited all the qualities of good soldiers in every position in which they had been placed. The furloughs were "approved and respectfully forwarded" with a word of praise of the applicants by regimental commander, brigade commander passed them on through division and Corps headquarters to the headquarters of the Department. There was really no reason why a few men from each regiment could not be spared. The objective point of the next campaign was under discussion. No extended movement could be undertaken until the Louisville and Nashville Railroad was placed in running order, and for a time they were granted for twenty days. When they came too thick and fast refusals followed and the applicants, indignant at what they construed into unjust discrimination against themselves, went home without leave. The result was the "temporary desertion" alluded to by General Rosecrans and by him attributed to the natural desire of men to see and provide for their families on the approach of winter.

Major-General William S. Rosecrans, the newly appointed commander of the Army of the Cumberland, graduated at West Point July 1, 1842, as brevet second lieutenant corps of engineers. He served as assistant engineer in the construction of the fortifications at Hampton Roads, Va., for one year, when he was promoted to the rank of second lieutenant and made assistant professor of engineering at the Military Academy at West Point. He served at his alma mater from 1843 to 1847 in the chairs of engineering and natural and experimental philosophy, when he was assigned to the repairs of Fort Adams, R. I.; thence in 1852 to the surveys of Taunton River and New Bedford harbor and the improvement of other harbors and light-houses on the New England coast. He resigned from the army April 1, 1854, and entered civil life at Cincinnati as a civil engineer and architect. His energy and capability for large undertakings, coupled with an inherent capacity for command, caused him to be selected as superintendent of a cannel coal company in Virginia and president of the Coal River Navigation Company. The discovery of coal oil at this period at once attracted his attention, and he had embarked in its manufacture when the tocsin of war called him into the field. His first duty was as volunteer aid to General McClellan, where his military experience rendered him very efficient in the organization of troops. He became commander of Camp Chase, colonel on the staff, chief engineer of the State of Ohio, and colonel Twenty-second O. V. I. in rapid succession, and was appointed brigadier-general U. S. A. May 16, 1861. After conducting the campaigns in West Virginia to a successful issue he was ordered South and assigned to command of a division in the Army of the Mississippi under General Pope. He participated creditably in

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH,

and after the evacuation and transfer of General Pope to the eastern army assumed command of the Army of the Mississippi and district of Corinth. His heroic defense of that post and pursuit of Van Dorn's defeated army following closely upon his military record in West Virginia again attracted the attention of the President and pointed him out as eminently fitted to succeed General Buell. General Rosecrans's order to proceed to Cincinnati did not specify the command to which he was to be assigned. His commission as major-general, dated September 16th, was of much later date than the commissions of Buell, Thomas, McCook, and Crittenden. General Thomas ranked him five months—McCook and Crittenden two months. On opening his orders at Cincinnati he found an autograph letter from General Halleck directing him to proceed to Louisville and relieve General Buell in command of the Army of the Ohio. The usual method has always been to issue simultaneous orders to both officers, thus affording time to the officer to be relieved in which to arrange the details of his office, but Halleck was a law unto himself, and in relieving an army officer usually did it in a way to render it equivalent to dismissal from the service. Rosecrans afterwards referred to his visit to Buell's headquarters as more like that of a constable bearing a writ for the ejectment of a tenant than as a general on his way to relieve a brother officer in command of an army.

The difficulty of rank was bridged over by ante-dating Rosecrans's commission to March 16th. In a subsequent interview with General Thomas, when the old soldier expressed the pleasure it would give him to serve under a general who had given such satisfactory evidence of fitness to command, but felt doubts as to his right to do so on account of the disparity in their rank, General Rosecrans frankly revealed the means by which his commission had been made to date from the period of his operations in Western Virginia, and that as it now stood, General Thomas need have no fears of compromising his dignity as a United States officer. The explanation was entirely satisfactory, and no question of the superior rank of the commanding general was ever raised.

After a rest and visit to his family of only sixty hours, General Rosecrans proceeded to Louisville, and

ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE ARMY

on the 28th of October, and on the 30th joined it at Bowling Green.

Here the first interview took place between the General and his Corps commanders. Major-General George H. Thomas, strong, grave, benignant, majestic in deportment, had now been with the army a year; revered by the entire army, loved by his old division, he was a man to be trusted. Major-General Thomas L. Crittenden, bold, impetuous, and of knightly grace of manner, possessed of that cheerful courage which finds its best expression on the battle-field, the idol of his old division, whose gallant conduct at Shiloh had won for its brave commander promotion to the rank of major-general. Major-General Alexander McD. McCook, the antipodes of Thomas, of never-failing good humor and undoubted courage, apt to neglect proper precautions for the safety of his command, but ever ready to assume all the responsibility of failure, over-confident, generous, yielding in his disposition, yet enjoying the confidence of the men whose heroism at Shiloh had won the eulogies of Sherman, added a second star upon his broad shoulders, and saved him from reproach after the repulse upon the field of Perryville.

In physique

THE THREE CORPS COMMANDERS

were as unlike as in personal character. Thomas had a massive, full rounded, erect, and powerful figure, six feet in stature. His features heavy, but well carved, with a strong, combative nose, his upper lip and square jaws and chin covered with a growth of sandy beard slightly silvered, bushy brows set like a canopy above clear blue eyes, a broad, white forehead, and golden hair in luxuriant profusion, covering a large, well-formed head. Out of fifty-four years of life he had worn the uniform of a United States officer twenty-two years, and in all that time he had borne himself as an officer and gentleman. Altogether a soldier, simple and unaffected, honest, truthful, patient, obedient to orders and requiring obedience, he never swerved an iota from the path of duty; acting upon well-matured opinions, he was a friend to be loved and an enemy to be feared.

Crittenden was tall, slender, and straight as an arrow. His clean-cut features were handsomely modeled, his eyes, dark and full of expression, were full of mirth when there was no cause for anger—then they shone with a dangerous light—a thin black beard worn full and pointed at the end, long flowing locks of raven hair falling nearly to his shoulders, beneath a black felt hat turned up at the sides, booted and spurred, with sword dangling at his side, and mounted upon his blooded horse, he was indeed a knight, "without fear and without reproach. A long experience in the diplomatic service and in refined society had imparted a high degree of grace and polish of manner, which, united to fair intellectual attainments and a magnetic smile which greeted all, from the simplest private soldier to the highest officer in his command, won the admiration and boundless affection of all who knew him.

McCook, low in stature, was inclined to be fleshy, a full face, innocent of beard, with the exception of a slight moustache, a broad, low forehead, regular features easily wrought into a smile, light hair, and a well-shaped head gave him a boyish appearance. Closer observation revealed the presence of more character. There was in the steadiness of gaze, the massive jaws, and the respectful demeanor of his subordinate officers, reason to believe that the youthful major-general had fairly

WON THE TWIN STARS

that shone upon his shoulder. He had graduated at West Point with the brevet rank of second lieutenant, had served in several campaigns against the Indians, been instructor in infantry tactics at West Point, where the breaking out of the war found him at thirty years of age. Ordered to Columbus, Ohio, as mustering and disbursing officer, he was appointed colonel of the First Ohio infantry, which he led in the first battle of Bull Run, receiving commendation where so many failed to deserve it. Reward came in the form of a commission as brigadier-general, with orders to report for duty to General Buell. The heroic conduct of his division at Shiloh added another star, and, but for the censure of General Buell for bringing on the battle of Perryville without orders, there was no reason why he should not be entrusted with the command to which his rank entitled him.

Notwithstanding General Rosecrans was personally a stranger to the army to the command of which he had been assigned, his name had long been familiar to both officers, and men, for war literature had sounded his praises. They had followed him through his campaigns in Western Virginia, had heard the sharp volleys of his musketry on their left at the siege of Corinth, and more recently the country had been electrified by his brilliant

VICTORY OVER VAN DORN.

The contrast between Generals Buell and Rosecrans was not more marked in personal appearance than in methods. The former was cold, impassive, and polite; the latter boisterous, warm-hearted, and brusque. The frigid dignity which hedged the person of Buell, inclosing department headquarters as within a wall of ice, behind which silence reigned, and through the guarded portals of which none ventured unbidden, was swept away by General Rosecrans, who transformed its solemn precincts into a busy workhouse, where chiefs of staff departments, surrounded by an army of clerks, wrought at their respective trades, placing the new commander *en rapport* with the most minute details of his army. Most of his staff accompanied him from the Army of the Mississippi. They had proved themselves capable and trustworthy, and the General naturally desired the presence of old friends in his military family. But there was at least one officer of the old department staff with whom the entire army parted with sincere regret—Col. James B. Fry, Buell's adjutant-general and chief of staff. The kindness of manner, the inexhaustible patience and good humor and never-failing knowledge of military affairs which this officer possessed had gone far to soften the asperities and dispel the chill which hung about department headquarters.

GENERALS NEGLEY AND PALMER,

left in occupation of Nashville, and compelled to rely upon their own resources, had found it no easy matter to obtain subsistence for their troops. Gen. Forrest, after having been relieved of command in Kentucky, and ordered to Tennessee to organize a cavalry command, had established his headquarters at Murfreesboro, where his fame as a dashing cavalry leader soon called about him hundreds of daring spirits, who were enlisted under his banners. The organizations known as partisan rangers having become obnoxious to the citizens, the act of Congress authorizing their formation was repealed, and many of the members, compelled to take choice between voluntary enlistment in corps of their own choosing, and conscription, coupled with assignment at the will of the War Department, joined his regiments, which were rapidly filled to the required number.

Negley was compelled to resort to a system of foraging, although the farmers in the vicinity were quite willing to furnish supplies to the straightened garrison and feed their enemies on the terms of high prices and prompt payment. It was necessary for their protection from Forrest's raiding parties that the supplies should appear to be furnished under compulsion. After Breckinridge's arrival it would have been possible, had his force been promptly increased, to starve the garrison into surrender, but

BRAGG WAS TOO JEALOUS

of his own glory to allow the rich prize of Nashville to fall into the hands of a subordinate. He allowed the golden moments to pass unheeded, while he visited Richmond to explain the cause of his rapid retreat from Kentucky.

The fortifications commenced by General Nelson in the summer, and strengthened by General Negley, were sufficient to resist assault. Frequent demands for surrender were made, but no determined effort was made to enforce them. Tired of confining himself to the defensive, General Negley on one occasion assumed the offensive by sending General Palmer with 800 men, infantry and cavalry in equal strength, with four guns on the Murfreesboro road toward La Vergne, and

COLONEL J. F. MILLER, WITH 1,800 INFANTRY,

by a circuitous route to the south of the village. General Palmer met the enemy at La Vergne, and in a spirited engagement of thirty minutes routed him, inflicting a loss of eighty-five killed and wounded, and capturing one hundred and seventy-five prisoners with three guns and one stand of regimental colors. This occurred early in October before the arrival of Breckinridge. The picket lines under the efficient command of Colonel Van Schroeder prevented surprises.

Bowling Green was the present terminus of the railroad, and an advance in the direction of Nashville was impracticable until it could be completed to Mitchellville, on the borders of Tennessee, forty miles from Nashville. Pending this movement, a telegraphic correspondence took place between General Rosecrans and the War Department. The immense preponderance of cavalry in Bragg's army was a cause for serious consideration. In moving away from his base at Louisville everything depended upon his ability to maintain the integrity of his own line of communication. The Cumberland River, a thin ribbon of water at this season, was scarcely capable of floating the lightest craft. One line of railroad would be taxed to its utmost to supply ammunition and subsistence for 100,000 men and accumulate such a store at Nashville as would justify an offensive movement against the enemy now concentrating in Middle Tennessee.

Nashville, held by the divisions of Negley and Palmer against Breckinridge, was now menaced by a powerful army advancing upon it from East Tennessee. Danger of surrender could be prevented only by immediate reinforcement. There was plainly

BUT ONE COURSE OPEN

to the new commander, and that was to follow out the plans of his predecessor. For persistence in refusing to follow Bragg into East Tennessee, Buell had been relieved; and now Rosecrans, taking up the glass relinquished by Buell, after a critical view of the whole field of operations, was compelled to adopt the plan inherited with the command. In the midst of the perplexities consequent upon assuming command of a strange army, in constant receipt of intelligence strongly confirming the danger with which Nashville was threatened, he received a positive order to turn his back upon that important strategical point, the capital of the State, and march hundreds of miles through an inhospitable region, stripped of supplies, in pursuit of the same army that was now concentrating in his front. This, too, with transportation barely sufficient to supply his army fifty miles from its base, while the small cavalry force at his command was totally inadequate to protect his trains for even that distance.

Fully alive to the responsibilities of his position, and keenly sensible of the possibilities resulting from a refusal to comply with the order, General Rosecrans rightly assumed to understand the situation in his own field better than it could be comprehended from a distance, and replying, briefly stated the impossibility of the march through Cumberland Gap, and determined upon a movement towards Nashville, thus demonstrating the wisdom of Buell's plans, as a year later his own plans were carried out by General Grant after he had relieved him at Chattanooga.

PRELIMINARY OPERATIONS,

On the 5th of November, Forrest drove in the pickets on the Columbia pike, who retired under the guns of the fort. Gen. Negley at once advanced and drove the confederate cavalry five miles. On the same day Morgan attacked Col. Smith at Edgefield, on the north bank of the Cumberland, opposite Nashville, and suffered a defeat, losing five killed and nineteen wounded.

On the 4th of November, Gen. Rosecrans ordered an advance upon Nashville. Gen. McCook moved through Franklin, Mitchellville, and Tyree's Springs, and, having posted Carlin's brigade at Edgefield, reached Nashville on the 9th. Gen. Crittenden, leaving Smith's division temporarily at Glasgow, marched with Wood's and Van Cleve's divisions through Scottsville to Gallatin. Here he was joined by Col. Kennett with the cavalry. Col. Zahm's brigade in advance, entering the town simultaneously with Harker's brigade of Wood's division, drove out the rear guard of Morgan's cavalry, returning from its defeat at Edgefield.

The entire

STRENGTH OF THE CAVALRY DIVISION,

under command of Col. John Kennett, a brave and efficient officer, was less than 4,000, poorly armed and equipped. The first request made by Gen. Rosecrans was a reiteration of one often made by Buell, to increase this important arm of the service. He also asked for Brigadier-General David S. Stanley, whose valor he had witnessed at Corinth, for chief of cavalry, and for revolving rifles with which to arm the cavalry. The response to the first was, the promised reinforcement of the cavalry division with 2,500 men, and to the last, after some delay by forwarding, 6,000 carbines. Gen. Stanley was ordered to report as chief of cavalry, and after his arrival, for the first time since its organization, this branch of the army began to be recognized as something more than a pointer to the infantry. At the request of Gen. Rosecrans, Brigadier-General J. J. Reynolds was assigned to him, and Brigadier-General Schuyler Hamilton was ordered also. The latter made a brief stay, serious illness requiring his return to his home in New York.

Gen. Thomas was assigned to the command of the three divisions composing the centre, together with the two divisions of Negley and Palmer at Nashville. On the 9th, McCook's corps was at Nashville. Crittenden's at Silver Springs, on the Cumberland, above the city, and the three divisions comprising the centre, on the railroad below Bowling Green. The returns made on the 10th, showed one-half of the brigades commanded by colonels. There were twenty-one brigadier-generals to command forty brigades and divisions.

The cavalry promised not having reported for duty, Gen. Rosecrans requested permission to mount several of his infantry regiments. He had, as yet, received no revolving rifles, and again urged that his requisitions be filled. The handful of cavalry at his command was too small and too poorly armed to cope with either Morgan, Forrest, or Wheeler. The two former brigades roamed at will over Middle Tennessee and Southern Kentucky,

CHALLENGING THE UNION CAVALRY

to a trial of arms.

Both the Union and confederate armies were advanced about 180 miles from their bases. Confronting each other at a point equidistant between Louisville and Chattanooga, the latter resting in perfect security, the railroad trains arriving and departing on schedule time, fearing no interruption and entirely unmolested during the period of its stay at Murfreesboro; its forty miles of front constantly patrolled by cavalry, on the alert to discover a hostile demonstration upon its rear, six thousand cavalry under General Wheeler, an experienced and vigilant commander, could be assembled within a few hours to meet and defeat any cavalry force that it was in the power of the Union commander to send out. The Union army, on the other hand, was dependent for the integrity of its railroad line upon infantry guards at the bridges and the principal depots along the line. Stockades were built and manned by forces varying in strength from a company to a brigade. The crossings of Green River at Munfordville, and Barren River at Bowling Green, were heavily guarded, and were unmolested, but the smaller bridges and miles of track were at the mercy of John Morgan's rough riders. This brigade, like Forrest's, was always accompanied by a battery of light artillery, drawn by swift and powerful horses, manned by experienced gunners, well

(Continued on Third page.)